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**YESTERDAY'S DOCTRINE FOR TODAY'S  
CONTINGENCIES: THE SMALL WARS MANUAL  
AND THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE  
IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

**A Monograph**

**by**

**Major Richard J. Macak, Jr.  
United States Marine Corps**

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understand the importance of tactical intelligence, and (4) they advocate the use of propaganda to achieve their ends. Then, these doctrinal concepts are compared with those contained in Mao Tse Tung's writings. Not surprisingly, the comparison reveals a striking similarity between all three approaches to LIC.

The monograph concludes by finding that the doctrinal concepts within the Manual and SAF are still very much applicable today since future insurgencies will, most likely, follow the Maoist approach. The study ends by recommending that a future counterinsurgency doctrine should employ a synthesis of both doctrines, thus combining the strengths of each. The constabulary concept featuring U.S. and host nation tactical military forces operating as one unit together with the SAF's various detachments (i.e. civil affairs, psychological operations, medical, engineering, etc.) focusing on the underlying causes of insurgency.

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by

Major Richard J. Macak, Jr.  
United States Marine Corps

School of Advanced Military Studies  
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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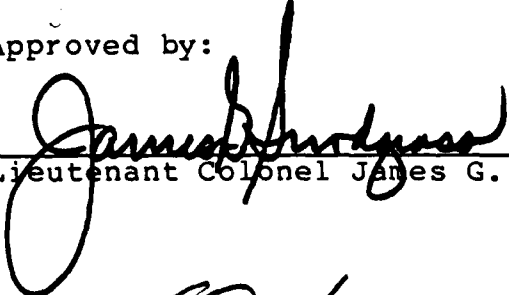
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Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lieutenant Colonel James G. Snodgrass, M.A. Monograph Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Colonel L. D. Holder, MA Director, School of  
Advanced Military  
Studies

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Director, Graduate  
Degree Programs

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## ABSTRACT

YESTERDAY'S DOCTRINE FOR TODAY'S CONTINGENCIES: THE SMALL WARS MANUAL AND THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT by MAJ Richard J. Macak, Jr., USMC, 47 pages.

The purpose of this monograph is to evaluate the doctrinal concepts underlying the U.S. Marine Corps' Small Wars Manual and the U.S. Army's Security Assistance Force (SAF), determining whether they are applicable today against a Maoist-led insurgency. In other words, does the doctrine formulated in the Manual and SAF over 50 and 20 years ago, respectively, have any utility in future Low Intensity Conflicts. In addition, the study questions whether these earlier doctrinal concepts, which attempted to isolate the insurgent through political, economic and social action, are more relevant than purely tactical military responses.

The study begins with a brief overview of the political realities influencing U.S. responses in the Third World. Next, the monograph explores the historical development, purpose, and doctrinal concepts pertaining to the Manual and the SAF. The study finds these doctrines similar in several areas: (1) they recognize the protracted nature of a counter-insurgency; (2) they first attempt through non-military means to isolate the insurgent by gaining the population's allegiance; (3) they understand the importance of tactical intelligence; and (4) they advocate the use of propaganda to achieve their ends. Then, these doctrinal concepts are compared with those contained in Mao Tse Tung's writings. Not surprisingly, the comparison reveals a striking similarity between all three approaches to LIC.

The monograph concludes by finding that the doctrinal concepts within the Manual and SAF are still very much applicable today since future insurgencies will, most likely, follow the Maoist approach. The study ends by recommending that a future counter-insurgency doctrine should employ a synthesis of both doctrines, thus combining the strengths of each. The product would possess the Manual's combined constabulary concept featuring U.S. and host nation tactical military forces operating as one unit together with the SAF's various detachments (i.e. civil affairs psychological operations, medical, engineering, etc.) focusing on the underlying causes of insurgency.

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Yesterday's Doctrine for Today's Contingencies:  
The Small Wars Manual and the Security Assistance Force  
in Low Intensity Conflict

I. Introduction

Although over forty years have elapsed since the last global conflict, regional disputes originating in Third World countries have been widespread. For the foreseeable future, internal instability in these developing countries will continue to proliferate because of East-West ideological confrontations that coalesce in these underdeveloped and emerging countries. Ironically, while the world has avoided the feared nuclear confrontation, a form of super-power conflict within the Third World has been ongoing since World War II in the form of wars of national liberation.

Moreover, U.S. attempts to halt the revolutionary process encouraged by the Soviets have been, at best, marginally successful for two reasons. First, many Third World countries possess almost insurmountable social, economic, political, and internal security problems which stifle individual aspirations, heightening frustrations, and lead to instability. Second, past U.S. policy has unfortunately relied too heavily on purely tactical



military solutions, focusing on killing guerrillas without bothering to gain and maintain the support of the civilian populations by ameliorating the underlying causes of instability.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for the U.S., two separate yet equally important and applicable bodies of doctrine, developed earlier in this century, exist as possible guides for future U.S. actions in the Third World. The first doctrinal publication is the Small Wars Manual of 1940 which was developed by the U.S. Marine Corps during the Latin American interventions throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The Manual is generally recognized as the most comprehensive document ever written on counter-insurgency before World War II.<sup>3</sup> The other body of doctrine encompasses the U.S. Army's Security Assistance Force, also known as the Special Action Force, which was formulated in the early 1960s combining the efforts of several specialties including engineers, medical, civil affairs, psychological operations, and special forces.<sup>4</sup> This monograph asks whether the doctrinal implications of the Small Wars Manual and the Security Assistance Force (SAF) are relevant to present day Low Intensity Conflict (LIC). In other words, does each document contain guidelines applicable in today's environment offering viable alternatives to strictly military options?

In order to validate the utility of these doctrinal publications, this monograph first overviews today's political realities constraining U.S. responses in the Third World. Next, the study examines each document's historical development, purpose, and doctrinal concepts. Then the study compares the doctrinal concepts of the Manual and the SAF with Mao Tse Tung's theoretical concepts on guerrilla warfare which emphasize gaining the population's allegiance. The study concludes with observations regarding the usefulness of doctrinal concepts that place more emphasis on curtailing the underlying causes of discontent rather than on the attrition of insurgency groups within the overall context of today's constraints on the overt use of military force.

## II. Political Realities

At the outset of this study, a quick overview of the political realities existing within the U.S. "body politic" will identify the context that will shape future U.S. actions in the Third World. First of all because of mass communications and worldwide interdependent economic systems, the actions in one part of the world will, more than likely, affect events in other areas. Thus, a regional dispute could possibly threaten our access to precious metals and other scarce commodities on which our industrial base

depends. In addition, our allies rely on us as the free world's leader "to maintain the freedom of the seas, and to support international stability" primarily in areas previously under colonial rule but today known as the Third World. Finally, our own economic well-being depends on the availability of foreign markets to consume our exports. In short, continued U.S. involvement in many future Third World conflicts is assured since a strategic withdrawal is out of the question.<sup>5</sup>

The second political factor is our country's cultural bias toward speedy resolutions to complex problems. We are impulsive and aggressive. We like quick solutions and happy endings. Our culture helps make us that way. For instance, we have become used to television's unrealistic weekly portrayals that invariably produce those happy endings at the conclusion of a thirty- or sixty-minute program just in time for a commercial break. Also, our capitalistic heritage endears to us the all-too-common "bottom line" approach that deals with short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions. Last, our news media generates a national attention span that stays focused, it seems, for only about two weeks at a time.

Unfortunately, these cultural tendencies do not suit us well in our dealings with today's insurgent.

His agenda calls for an extensive commitment of time, energy, and resources; in short, a protracted conflict. Douglas Pike, author of PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam, appropriately identifies an ominous signal to us if we are unable to develop the long-term solution to the insurgent when he states that:

The dangerous future scenario is clear: a minority, even a tiny minority, in a society becomes determined to have its way through protracted conflict; it demonstrates its implacable determination and establishes its credibility that it intends to fight a fifty-year war. The unfortunate meaning seems to be that no democracy can win a protracted conflict.

Pike also indicates that the West should understand how the North Vietnamese fought this protracted conflict using the dual concepts of political dau tranh and armed dau tranh to defeat three different enemies (Japan, France, and U.S.) during a forty-year span.<sup>6</sup>

To counteract these cultural tendencies, the U.S. must, according to the Report by the Regional Conflict Working Group of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy entitled "A U.S. Strategy for Third World Conflict", prepare "mentally and philosophically as well as materially and financially" for the insurgent's challenge. This preparation "will require patience, clarity of purpose, and unity of effort" involving "a sustained long-term commitment."

Thus, the study recognizes the insurgency's protracted nature challenging the societies and governments of our Third World allies."

The last noteworthy political reality facing U.S. policy makers is the loss of the bipartisan consensus enjoyed by previous presidents such as Eisenhower and Kennedy. These presidents usually gathered Congressional favor for their foreign policy initiatives whereas today's chief executives do not receive such public understanding and support. In fact, recent political debate on U.S. participation in Third World conflicts has been emotionally charged and divisive. This debate has produced two widely separated political stances on U.S. intervention. One group argues that the U.S. has "no right or obligation to influence events in the Third World with any military means, and no capacity to change the course of history...." Conversely, the other group views the Third World as the test of strength between East and West and desires "to contest with all means" any Soviet adventures in the Third World. Fortunately, the majority favors neither of these divergent political poles. However, a strong public consensus on future U.S. actions in the Third World is still lacking."

Recognizing this lack of domestic political consensus, the Regional Working Group has proposed a

"strategy of selective involvement." Accordingly, "the U.S. should be prepared when its own key national interests are engaged to strengthen allies and friends in the Third World against external and internal threats, and thus to help defend governments undertaking political, economic or social reforms which will ameliorate the root causes of instability or basic vulnerabilities." In addition, the U.S. should "support selected resistance movements"---"aid cooperating foreign governments in suppressing illegal drug trafficking" and "deter, preempt, and react to terrorism." In short, this selective involvement strategy incorporates a variety of tactical responses which advocate the indirect application of military power. This "indirect approach" uses security assistance helping others help themselves on a regional basis. It also concentrates much effort on the acquisition of tactical intelligence that is so necessary in a low intensity conflict.'

In summation, these existing factors have led us to the following conclusions: (1) The U.S. will remain for, the foreseeable future, involved in the Third World not withdrawing into some sort of strategic isolation; (2) U.S. cultural tendencies must be offset by a national strategy which requires a patient, long-term commitment; and (3) if committed into a Third

World regional conflict, the U.S. should employ tactical military forces in an indirect manner, using security assistance measures helping others help themselves. Within this political context what kinds of doctrinal approaches will succeed in the Third World? To answer this question we need to explore, in detail, the doctrinal tenets of the Small Wars Manual and the Security Assistance Force.

### III. Small Wars Manual

Throughout the first three decades of this century the United States Marine Corps was continually involved with the implementation of U.S. State Department foreign policy objectives in countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. In fact, it was the Marine Corps' 20-year campaign in Nicaragua which ended on 1 January 1933 that primarily contributed to the counterinsurgency doctrine found in the Manual.<sup>10</sup> During this period, the thoughtful articles of many Marine officers who served in this protracted campaign appeared in publications such as the Marine Corps Gazette and the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings.<sup>11</sup> The involvement served as a catalyst for intellectual development within the Corps and the articles offered valuable insights into the realities of "small wars".

In a May 1931 article in the Gazette entitled "An Introduction to the Tactics and Techniques of Small

Wars," Major Harold H. Utley, a Nicaraguan veteran, author, and small wars instructor at Quantico's Schools Command, wrote that, although the Marine Corps maintained many historical examples of small wars, "few real studies seem to have been made of them."<sup>12</sup> It would not be long, however, before the Corps would be seriously analyzing the evidence accumulated throughout the occupation. By May 1934, after several additional articles were published on such topics as "Aircraft in Bush Warfare", "The Supply System in Nicaragua," and "The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua," Major Charles J. Miller wrote that it "would seem to devolve upon the schools to digest and place the material in presentable form for the guidance and instruction of all the officers of the Corps." He concluded by noting that "the subject as a whole has only received a cursory examination" and much more is needed to "furnish the students with a clear and complete picture of all the tasks, obligations, and responsibilities that may devolve on a Marine Corps expeditionary force when intervening as an occupation force."<sup>13</sup>

The following year the Marine Corps produced the first edition of the Small Wars Manual, based upon the efforts of Major Utley and other small wars instructors at Quantico. The authors drew material from Gazette and Proceedings articles, small wars lesson plans and



Colonel C. E. Calwell's 1906 extensive study entitled "Small Wars--Their Principles and Practice." They distilled not only their own Caribbean experiences but "operations ranging from the French conquest of Indo-China to the Battle of Little Big Horn" into a 428-page, 15-chapter treatise which has been called one of the finest documents written on counterinsurgency before World War II.<sup>4</sup> In short, the authors sought to provide an operational concept for small wars.

The chapter headings provide some indication of the document's depth and range: Organization, Logistics, Training, Initial Operations, Infantry Patrols, Mounted Detachments, Convoys and Convoy Escorts, Aviation, River Operations, Disarmament of Population, Armed Native Organizations, Military Government, Supervision of Elections, and Withdrawal. A complete listing of the Manual's contents is provided at Appendix A. It follows then that the Manual's primary intent was providing specific guidance "on how to protect the interests of the U.S. and the safety, security, interests and property of American nationals in places threatened by revolution." The Corps published a final revision in 1940 which, to this day, has not been changed.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Manual's blueprint for future counterinsurgencies closely corresponded to past

events in Nicaragua. For instance, it divided the process of military intervention into five phases. First, the Marines would begin a gradual build up ashore. Second, they would move inland in a coordinated manner occupying principal cities, then commencing tactical combat operations against enemy forces, if necessary. Third, they would develop a non-partisan constabulary force to assist the civil affairs projects and internal defense. Although the Marines remained the dominant military force, the constabulary would take on a more active role in counter guerrilla patrolling. The Marines, in the meantime, would withdraw to garrison the larger cities. Fourth, they would begin preparations for the supervision of free elections which fostered renewed faith by the populace in their local and national governments. Fifth, once the elections were completed, they would withdraw leaving the constabulary in control supporting the newly elected government.<sup>13</sup>

The Manual's description of the nature of operations in a small war was especially helpful. It described a campaign plan that "should attempt to gain psychological ascendancy over the outlaw or insurgent element prior to hostilities" using armed force only as a last result if "forceful declarations of intentions . . . without threat or promise" or demonstrations and

displays of naval or military force failed. The Manual warned that the "aim is not to develop a belligerent spirit in our men but rather one of caution and steadiness. Instead of employing force, one strives to accomplish the purpose by diplomacy." The virtues of Sun Tzu were recalled when the Manual stated that "the commander who gains his objective in a small war without firing a shot has attained far greater success than one who resorted to the use of arms." It further cautioned that small wars offered no defined fronts; "fronts" instead existed throughout "the whole length and breadth of the land" and that intervening forces must operate widely dispersed employing "mobility and flexibility" while fighting outnumbered. Small wars, the Manual continued, usually evolved into guerrilla warfare if the insurgent continued his resistance after the Marines came ashore. The problem with this type of war was that "members of native forces will become innocent peasant workers when it suits their fancy and convenience." Furthermore, partisans will handicap the Marines' effectiveness by keeping guerrillas informed of their movements. This concern with tactical intelligence also dominated the Manual's pages.<sup>17</sup>

Tactical intelligence was critical to the intervening force since the insurgent enjoyed several advantages through his knowledge of terrain, trails and

obstacles. However, the Manual cautioned against presuming all natives were hostile if they withheld information. A peasant, hoping for peace and order, who was constantly menaced and fearful of the guerrilla and who did not place any confidence in an occasional visiting patrol could not be faulted for his noncompliance. To increase their intelligence capabilities, however, the Manual recommended using the constabulary and auxiliary forces. The constabulary consisted of both Marines and local volunteers while the auxiliaries were community leaders who were granted powers similar to those of a sheriff. Basically, the auxiliary worked for the local constabulary commander keeping him abreast of the domestic situation forestalling insurrection or rebellion. Both the constabulary and their auxiliaries provided an internal intelligence asset that helped offset guerrilla advantages.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the Manual, its authors recognized that the basis for future interventions would probably be "of an economic, political or social nature and not a military problem in origin." Also, "the application of purely military measures may not, by itself restore peace and orderly government . . ." because "conditions may have originated years ago" which were allowed to fester without any attempts to rectify them. Finally,

the situation developed to a point beyond the control of the civil authorities requiring "basically a political adjustment" with military measures of a secondary importance "applied only to such extent as to permit the continuation of peaceful corrective actions."<sup>19</sup>

In order to understand the native population, the Manual advocated a careful study of their customs, racial qualities, psychology, and history. This analysis enabled Marine officers to educate their enlisted men about the host country's populace ensuring a proper attitude once ashore. Additionally, this evaluation of the host country included an investigation into "the reasons for the existing emergency" so that feasible approaches could be adopted avoiding any cultural repercussions. To avoid alienating the local population, the Manual provided some basic guidelines:

1. Appropriately recognize social customs such as class distinctions and dress.
2. Although a thorough knowledge of the political situation is a must, avoid any appearance of favoritism.
3. Respect all religious customs.<sup>20</sup>

For the Marines, a proper understanding of the native population's psychological and social

characteristics was critical in the selection of the most advantageous methods dealing with the civilian sector. In other words, was the best approach a direct or indirect one?

[Would the population likely respond to] orders, ...admonitions, unconcealed effort or administrative control? Or shall indirect methods by subtle inspiration, propaganda through suggestion, or undermining the influential leaders of the opposition be attempted? Direct methods will naturally create some antagonism and encourage certain obstruction, but if these methods of approach are successful the result may be more speedily attained. Indirect approach, on the other hand, might require more time for accomplishment, but the result may be equally effective and probably with less regrettable bitterness.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the Manual continually counseled its readers to consider carefully the situation in its entire context before acting.

Since the Manual acknowledged that local populations responded more favorably to the indirect approach, it advocated the use of propaganda, assuring the people the "intervention was a form of friendly assistance" intended to restore law and order at the earliest opportunity. Another way propaganda was useful in alleviating the native population's anxiety was through continual reassurance that the constabulary would revert to local control after U.S. withdrawal. In addition, the Marines countered enemy propaganda by using civilians to accompany them into the countryside

outlining the U.S. government's peaceful and friendly intention. Finally, the Marines were continually concerned with propaganda that appeared in the U.S. press at home which was usually antagonistic in nature. They debated whether to "restrict publicity to a minimum in order to prevent the spread of unfavorable and antagonistic propaganda at home" but decided, in the end, against that policy, instead deferring any press queries to appropriate civil authorities.<sup>22</sup>

Continually concerned about the local population's allegiance, the Manual contained specific guidance regarding the conduct of friendly troops. Emphasizing the indirect approach, the Manual stated that small wars differed from conventional wars where maximum force was used for overall physical effect. Specifically, in small wars, caution must be exercised, and instead of striving to generate the maximum power with forces available, the goal was to gain decisive results with the least application of force and the consequent minimum loss of life.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, "tolerance, sympathy and kindness should be the keynote of our relationship with the main population." "There is no service which calls for greater exercise of judgment, persistency, patience, tact . . . than in small wars, and nowhere is more of the human and sympathetic side of a military force demanded than in

this type of operation."<sup>14</sup> Finally, Marines were advised not to humiliate the natives by saying or implying anything that suggested any inferiority of their status. "They should never be treated as a conquered people," otherwise, resentment and unfavorable reaction would follow. Likewise, a superiority complex on the part of military commanders would prove counterproductive.<sup>15</sup>

With its institutional counterinsurgency heritage embodied by and codified in the Small Wars Manual, the Corps approached tactical operations in Vietnam within this context. Employing concepts reminiscent of the constabulary and neutral zones,<sup>16</sup> the Corps created a tactical force known as a Combined Action Platoon (CAP) consisting of 15 Marines (actually 14 Marines and one Navy corpsman) and 24 paramilitary forces (PFs) living and operating within established villages (neutral zones). By this daily and sustained contact with the population combined with aggressive night patrolling, ambushes, and a civil affairs program, the CAPs sought to destroy the village's VC infrastructure, protect the local populace, organize intelligence nets, and train additional PFs. By 1966, a year after the Corps instituted the CAP concept, 57 villages contained a CAP; by 1967, 79.<sup>17</sup> Commenting on the Marines' approach, the noted expert on counterinsurgency



warfare, Sir Robert Thompson, stated, "Of all the United States forces, the Marine Corps alone made a serious attempt to achieve permanent and lasting results in the tactical area of responsibility by seeking to protect the rural population."<sup>23</sup>

Obviously, the CAP concept recognized the long-term nature of counterinsurgency warfare. Unfortunately, the Army, either through impatience or misunderstanding, did not favor a concept that lacked offensive initiative and insisted that the Marines adopt a more aggressive approach. Ultimately, search and destroy operations emphasizing quick, decisive actions focusing on killing guerrillas became the standard instead of the long-term approach characterized by the CAPs attaining the population's allegiance.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, the Manual offered a counterinsurgency strategy that fully appreciated the importance of the local population in a guerrilla war. It recognized the link between the insurgent and the population and attempted, by the indirect application of military force, to degrade the populace's support to the insurgent. The Manual's realistic portrayal of the numerous disadvantages incumbent on an intervening force implies the need for an extensive tactical intelligence network. By completely understanding the

country's cultural background and history, the Marines could establish excellent civil-military relationships fostering civilian allegiance cutting off the insurgent. Thus, by withholding the direct application of military force as a last option, the Manual advocated the primacy of non-violent diplomatic, economic, political, or social solutions to insurgency.

#### IV. Special Action Force/ Security Assistance Force

Next, we turn our attention to the Special Action Force or Security Assistance Force (SAF) to understand its background and conceptual approach to insurgencies. As the decade of the 1960s began, an unsettling pattern of growing insurgencies in undeveloped areas of Africa, Latin America, and Asia emerged. Cuba, Malaya, Algeria, the Philippines, and Vietnam were countries which had experienced "wars of national liberation." These uprisings caught the eye of President John F. Kennedy, who instructed "his administration to begin searching around for effective tools to counter Communist-supported insurgencies." In addition, the new president brought his appeal for an effective force against the insurgent directly to the military establishment when he addressed the 1962 graduating class at West Point, advising that a "whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force" was

necessary in the Third World. With this interest and direction from the chief executive, the U.S. Army, along with the other services, "rushed to get into the act." Not surprisingly, the Army chose its Special Forces organization as its principal counterinsurgency force since it had spent the previous decade gaining counter guerrilla experience while conducting maneuvers in Germany.<sup>12</sup>

The choice was a good one since the "Special Forces (SF) detachments were small, self-contained, and capable of operating independently in remote areas for extended periods of time." In addition, they were language qualified and familiar with other cultures. Accordingly, a rapid expansion in the SF ranks occurred after 1961 with the three under-strength groups--the 10th in Bad Tolz, the 1st in Okinawa, and the 7th at Fort Bragg--quadrupling their numbers to a total of 4500 men. In addition, other groups were planned for the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.<sup>13</sup>

The basic organization of an SF team allowed its members to conduct counter guerrilla instruction in such areas as tactics, weapons, intelligence, demolitions, and communications. Also, the medics and engineers could conduct a limited civic action program. By 1963, however, the Army realized that the small SF team would require augmentation if it was to become an effective

counterinsurgency tool. This augmentation was packaged into a concept known as a Special Action Force implemented by the Army on 25 November 1963.<sup>11</sup>

Basically, the SAF was a task-organized unit featuring a SF group as the nucleus with other detachments included in the organization. For instance, the SF group headquarters was augmented by detachments from Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, Engineers, Military Police, and Medical units (see Appendix B). Thus, the SAF greatly expanded the capabilities of the SF team while retaining its area orientation, partial language qualification, and quick responsiveness.<sup>12</sup>

Now the Army had created a much more viable counterinsurgency tool since the means were available to effect a more positive impact on the local populace. As an example, the Civil Affairs detachment now included "specialists in public health, education, sanitation, civil administration, public works, and forestry." The Psychological Operations detachment contained "experts in radio and leaflet propaganda, public information, entertainment and education." The Engineer detachment was capable of many different kinds of "construction, maintenance, road building, water purification, and well drilling." The Medical detachment was proficient in "preventive medicine, dentistry, hygiene, sanitation, and public health as

well as general medicine and surgery." Finally, if an Intelligence detachment was included, it could provide "photo interpretation, agent handling and nets, counterintelligence, lie detection, lock picking, wiretapping, bugging and debugging." All in all, the SAF represented a sizeable team, deep in talent and task organized for almost any counterinsurgency situation.<sup>14</sup>

With all of this talent and capability, what was the SAF's track record in the Third World? To answer that question, we can focus on the SAF created to respond to regional requests for assistance throughout Latin America. In January 1963, the Army activated the 8th SF Group which formed the nucleus of the 8th SAF located at Fort Gulick in the Panama Canal Zone. During its 10-year life span, the SAF busily supported Alliance for Progress countries working under the charge of the respective U.S. ambassador with the Country Teams and Military Groups. In fact, between 1963 and 1970 almost 500 SAF teams were deployed to 19 countries.<sup>15</sup>

After action reports of this period indicate a variety of projects completed. For instance, between 1 May 1966 and 30 April 1967, 136 training teams visited nearly all of the Latin American countries expending over 22,000 man days in the region. The most common

work completed throughout the region was engineering civic action, medical surveys, counterinsurgency instruction, potable water surveys (well drilling), and equipment maintenance projects. The after action reports lauded the pre-deployment coordination visits to the host country in advance of the SAF teams because they "helped to foresee and overcome many potential problems prior to their arising or becoming critical. In addition, one report advised that "psychological operations have been most effective when employed in conjunction with military operations or civic action . . . to emphasize the positive results of government action versus the negative aspects of communist agitation."

Finally, two other comments are noteworthy. First, the teams found that when teaching tactics the use of local military history as teaching points intensified student interest and increased the instructor's prestige. Second, during the initial planning and construction phases of civic action projects, the local citizens must be incorporated "otherwise it ends up being just another 'Gringo' project or another military project."

Other projects worth noting during this 10-year period included the medical accomplishments in Bolivia where SAF teams worked with Bolivian doctors to control

that country's outbreak of hemorrhagic fever. The fever killed 300 people before the teams instituted "a drastic and successful program of rodent control and food protection."<sup>17</sup> In Honduras a highly successful, long-term civic action project offered instruction in "agriculture, food processing, veterinary medicine, sanitary engineering, automotive mechanics, diesel engines, radio and television repair, welding, industrial machinery, electricity and refrigeration." In Panama, the editors and publishers from the Psychological detachment prepared a farmer's guide which contained helpful hints on how to increase crop and livestock production and maintain farm tools and equipment. This pamphlet, when delivered by the Guardia Nacional, was directly responsible for the improved relationship between the government and peasantry. Finally, the counterinsurgency instruction in the region helped create "special light infantry units--Lanceros, Cazadores, Rangers--for counter guerrilla operations." In fact, it was one of these SAF-trained units that, in 1967, tracked down and captured Che Guevara in Bolivia.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, the latter half of the 1960s saw a decreasing trend in congressional appropriations for Latin American military assistance with aid dropping from \$81 million in 1966 to only \$16 million by 1971.

Although the SAF was certainly a bargain considering benefits derived from defense dollars expended, it still had to compete with conventional programs. Ultimately, the low profile, civic action oriented SAF programs were lost in the shuffle during latter stages of our Vietnam involvement, a period characterized by shrinking defense budgets.<sup>33</sup>

Conceptually, the SAF offered a viable alternative as a counterinsurgency strategy. Its wide ranging capabilities offered an option to theater planners focusing on the prevention of internal dissatisfaction. The concept was a tool targeted toward the civilian population. The advisory and teaching nature of the visiting teams involved the local population both in project planning and execution. In other words, the SAFs were aware that their effectiveness was enhanced if they acted as "advisors" instead of "doers" helping others help themselves. Most importantly, the SAFs, by their nature, employed indirect military force through their detachments' technical expertise fostering improved relationships between the host government and the population.<sup>40</sup>

Probably the most important aspect of the SAF was its regional orientation, responsiveness and language capability contributing to a fuller understanding of and appreciation for the long-term, underlying internal



conditions fostering instability. This long-term, regional view based upon the various situational problems in each country was essential. Through this understanding, the teams could recognize potential problems before they expanded.<sup>41</sup>

Another important aspect of the SAF concept was its balanced approach to regional issues. Its blending of internal defense assistance with efforts improving quality of life conditions simultaneously addressed the guerrilla problem while mobilizing popular support for the government. Thus, while employing the "minimum essential force" reducing civilian casualties and hardships, the concept focused most of its efforts in alleviating the conditions contributing to unrest.<sup>42</sup>

Ironically, in the mid 1960s, despite the SAF's positive record, the Army found evidence suggesting the concept of employment was invalid. Their study revealed that host countries sometimes requested only particular detachments from the SAF instead of the entire force. The Army questioned this piecemeal approach, which underemployed some elements of the team --a team conceptually designed to deploy intact. Additional research, however, reveals that the SAFs continued in operation past this point which indicates that the employment problems were likely rectified between the host country Military Assistance Group and

the Army.<sup>43</sup> Another problem with the SAF concept was the U.S. military's bias toward conventional forces and quick fixes. The SAF's rather unglamorous, low profile, long-term nature did not seem to mesh well with the mainstream Army.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the SAF concept appears viable as a counter to worldwide insurgencies employing minimum force while attacking underlying regional social, economic, and political problems.

#### V. The Maoist Approach

With the conceptual reviews underlying the Small Wars Manual and SAF completed, an overview of Mao Tse Tung's doctrinal concepts on guerrilla warfare is appropriate since future insurgencies will likely emulate Mao's successful campaign. The probable future appeal of the Maoist approach lies in the success it has enjoyed throughout the world. For instance, Ho Chi Minh and General Giap applied Mao's tenets with the Vietminh and Vietcong in Vietnam as did Fidel Castro in Cuba, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the Shining Path in Peru, and the FMLN in El Salvador.<sup>45</sup> If, because of this worldwide success and appeal, future insurgencies employ similar strategies in the Third World, we should be aware of the underlying principles guiding those movements to determine whether the counterinsurgency

concepts espoused by the Manual and the SAF have any utility.

In its simplest terms, Mao's doctrine for conducting an insurgency advocates a protracted war to build forces while mobilizing the masses. Then, by using tactical intelligence gained through a close link with the people, the movement decisively employs surprise to tactically defeat government forces. The movement then uses propaganda emphasizing its own effectiveness while degrading the government's. Furthermore, propaganda is used to influence international opinion as well. With this "broad brush view in mind, each doctrinal component is next reviewed in greater detail.

According to Mao, a quick victory in a War of Resistance "is something that exists only in one's mind and not in objective reality, and that is a mere illusion, a false theory." Therefore, he continued, after "an objective and comprehensive appraisal" of both ourselves and the enemy "the only way to final victory is in the strategy of protracted war."<sup>4</sup> This arduous and protracted war was necessary because of the enemy's initial superiority. Although strong, the enemy, because of "unfavorable factors", will see his strength continually reduced whereas the movement's initial inferiority will be offset by "favorable

factors." These "unfavorable factors" were, in Mao's example, Japan's limited natural resources both in material and manpower not allowing her to successfully fight a long war. On the other hand, China possessed ample resources necessary for a long-term commitment. Essentially, Mao envisioned a shifting balance between strengths and weaknesses with China gradually overcoming its adversary. Furthermore, since at any given time each country possessed only small advantages over the other, all tactical defeats or victories would be "restricted in degree, and hence the war becomes protracted."<sup>4</sup> Thus, a protracted war allowed China to materialize its untapped natural resource potentials while simultaneously draining Japan of its treasure and manpower.

Given the latitude offered by a protracted war, the movement concentrated its efforts on the people since, according to Mao, "the richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people." Therefore, political mobilization was necessary to ensure "an uninterrupted flow of reinforcements" and to raise finances for the movement.<sup>4i</sup> In addition, mobilization united the people "as one man [to] carry on the war with unflinching perseverance" broadening and consolidating the movement, sweeping "away all pessimism and ideas of compromise," promoting "the will

to hard struggle" and applying "new wartime policies."<sup>49</sup>

Further evidence of Mao's faith in the people lies in his criticism of the primacy of the "weapons decided everything" theory. He attacked those who thought China would lose because of a weapon inferiority stating, "Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by the people."<sup>50</sup>

Finally, political mobilization must reach everyone, even those "in the remoter regions beyond the noise of the guns [who] are carrying on quietly as usual." This mobilization of the common people is crucial and "will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create the conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisite for overcoming every difficulty in the war."<sup>51</sup> Obviously, Mao's writings indicate he was primarily concerned with gaining the population's allegiance. Defeating the enemy's tactical military forces was also high on his agenda. The political mass mobilization and the enemy's tactical defeat were

critically linked by Mao's ability to gain timely and accurate tactical intelligence.

Mao's overall aim in his three-staged war appears influenced by Karl von Clausewitz in view of statements such as "destruction of the enemy is the primary object of war" and "war is a continuation of politics by other means."<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Mao sounds familiar with Clausewitz' concept of warfare's inherent uncertainty and cites two points necessary to transfer "the uncertainties of war to the enemy while securing the greatest possible certainty for ourselves gaining superiority, the initiative and victory."<sup>32</sup> The first point is his ability to create misconceptions within the enemy and the second, to attain tactical surprise. To create the uncertainty, Mao needed mass support "to block the leakage of news" enabling him to use ruses leading to enemy misjudgments. It follows then that Mao's ability to gain enemy tactical intelligence and to prevent the enemy from acquiring similar intelligence allowed "a force which is inferior but prepared [to] defeat a superior enemy by surprise attack."<sup>33</sup> Thus, tactical intelligence provided by the politically motivated population enabled the movement to screen their actions, conduct widespread raids, and defeat larger enemy tactical forces.

Finally, the movement used propaganda both internally and externally advertising their success against the enemy. Internally, propaganda continued the political mobilization process "by word of mouth, by leaflets and bulletins, by newspapers, books and pamphlets, through plays and films, through schools, through mass organization and through cadres." Externally, international propaganda targeted the Japanese civilian sector and attempted to secure foreign support.<sup>33</sup> Propaganda also affected the invading Japanese military forces "disintegrating its morale by stimulating the growth of homesickness, war-weariness and even anti-war sentiment." In a sense the movement's propaganda acted as a force multiplier, shortening the war by attacking the enemy's population, creating discontent at home, and generating worldwide condemnation causing, among other things, a trade shrinkage.<sup>34</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

As a result of the previous conceptual reviews, one can see quite clearly the close doctrinal linkage between the Small Wars Manual, the Security Assistance Force and Mao Tse Tung's approach to war. In each we see the underlying concepts regarding war's protracted nature, the population's decisive importance, the crucial need for tactical intelligence and propaganda's

significance to both domestic and foreign audiences. Therefore, the answer to the question asked earlier in this monograph regarding the utility of the Manual and SAF in today's counterinsurgency setting points toward an affirmative response. This appears so because, in all likelihood, future insurgent leaders will copy the Maoist approach, attempting to achieve the success others have enjoyed in the past. Thus, while the insurgent is trying to mobilize the masses, U.S. tactical forces will be also focusing their sustained efforts on the same goal. This would be accomplished through an enduring long-term commitment--"advising and not "doing"--helping others help themselves through tactical instruction to bolster internal defense and civic action projects. Moreover, once the insurgent begins losing his popular support, his days as a viable government threat are numbered since he loses his ability to gain tactical intelligence and his propaganda becomes less strident and believable.

Yet, determining just whether the old doctrine is still applicable today may not sufficiently prepare us for the future. Perhaps we should take this study one step further by proposing a design for the optimum approach to the future worldwide insurgency threat. Perhaps a synthesis of the Manual's ideas with the SAF's is an alternative we might further explore.



Combining the two concepts would certainly produce improved capabilities in several areas. First, the SAF's specific regional orientation and language skills would enhance the Manual's combined constabulary concept. Although the Marines recognized the need for an area cultural study, it was usually conducted enroute aboard ships during the Caribbean interventions. This abbreviated area study was augmented by Quantico's introduction of small wars classes in the 1920s. Likewise, this limited regional education continued when Marines entering the Combined Action Program during the 1960s "received rudimentary training in Vietnamese language, history, customs, and military and governmental organization."<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the more in-depth education and training inherent within the SAFs would obviously upgrade the intervening force's ability to interact with the people. In short, a bona fide area study requires a significant devotion of time and effort, something akin to a Foreign Area Officer curriculum.

Second, the SAF's extensive technical capabilities in areas such as civil affairs, psychological operations, engineering, and medicine are significantly better than those possessed by the Marines. Unfortunately, with current service-wide personnel shortages in civil affairs and psychological

operations, these capabilities may take some time to materialize.

Finally, the constabulary concept espoused by the Manual and subsequently employed in Vietnam, creating a combined force that remains tied to a specific geographical area, would significantly improve U.S. counterinsurgency forces. A sustained commitment of this nature sends a positive signal to the populations by ensuring village security and eventually cutting the insurgent's link to the people. All in all, a force such as this would provide an organization certainly capable of employing direct military power to kill guerrillas in tactical engagements, if necessary. But, more importantly, its real strength would lie in its indirect application of power to attack the root causes of insurgency. This force would closely resemble the one General Paul Gorman, USA (Ret.), visualized based upon his prediction that logisticians, engineers, and medics may have more utility in low intensity conflict than others specially trained in small unit actions.<sup>31</sup>

As this study has shown, a counterinsurgency campaign by its very nature is a formidable task complicated by its various intertwining political, economic, psychological, and military factors. Conversely, this monograph has revealed the utility of doctrinal concepts used earlier in our country's

history that were primarily focused on non-violent solutions first and tactical military requirements second. But as Colonel Charles M. Simpson, III, USA (Ret.), has pointed out in his book Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years, "in theory, the aid will be used correctly, and the advice will be heeded. Needed reforms will be undertaken, the citizenry will find new hope, and the insurgent and his infrastructure will be correctly identified and properly neutralized." Unfortunately, he continues, it seldom works that way in reality. "Indigenous military commanders all too often see little need for restraint or concern for the peasantry. Wealthy landowners defy attempts to break up their holdings or dilute their power. Local political leaders are interested in their own survival, and reform looks like a more chancy course than repression, particularly if the armed forces are in the politicians' control."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, today's political realities demand our continued participation in the Third World not only for reasons cited earlier but to stem the illegal drug flow and to ease regional tensions producing the ever present and increasing flow of illegal aliens into this country. Perhaps with a doctrine based upon proven concepts that attempt to rectify the underlying causes of insurgency rather than on the physical destruction of the guerrilla, we can

successfully participate in regional conflicts that  
affect our national interests and security.

## APPENDIX A

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## APPENDIX B

### Authorized and Programmed Strengths of SAF Organizations - 1965

#### ASIA SAF

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Authorized Strength</u>
1 SFG	1316
97 CA Gp	86
539 Engr Det	110
156 Med Det	110
441 MI Det	25
400 USASA SOD	44
TOTAL	<u>1691</u>

#### MID EAST SAF

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Authorized Strength</u>
6 SFG	961
2 CA Co	96
535 Engr Det	60
801 MI Det	60
82 MP Det	40
12 Psywar Co	72
TOTAL	<u>1279</u>

#### AFRICA SAF

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength Programmed End FY 65</u>
3 SFG	568
1 CA Co	86
534 Engr Det	60
705 MI Det	60
81 MP Det	40
19 Psywar Co	72
TOTAL	<u>886</u>

#### LATIN AMERICA SAF

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength Programmed End FY 65</u>
8 SFG	729
146 Engr Det	42
255 Med Det	46
610 MI Det	36
550 MP Det	36
9 Psywar Det	57
401 ASA SOD	44
3 CA Det	68
TOTAL	<u>1056</u>

Source: United States Army Combat Developments Command  
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3. Department of the Navy, HQ United States Marine Corps, Small Wars Manual, (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.), Forward.
4. U.S. Army, Field Manual 100-20, Low Intensity Conflict (Washington, DC, 16 January 1981), p. 127.
5. Schaden, pp. 50, 52.
6. Douglas Pike, PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam. (Novato: Presidio Press, 1986), pp. 56, 217. For a more detailed discussion of the dau tranh concept, see chapters 9 and 10. The author describes the concepts of armed dau tranh as the revolutionary violence program comprising military action. Political dau tranh included the "systematic coercive activity that involves motivation, social organization, communication of ideas, and mobilization of manpower and support" (p. 217).
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15. Schaffer, pp. 46-47; Small Wars Manual, Chapter I.

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17. Ibid., Chap. I, pp. 13, 14 and 18.

18. Ibid., Chap. I, p. 25 and Chap. XII, p. 21.

19. Ibid., Chap. I, pp. 15-16.

20. Ibid., Chap. I, pp. 18-19.

21. Ibid., Chap. I, p. 28.

22. Schaffer, p. 48; Small Wars Manual, Chap. I pp. 18-29.

23. Small Wars Manual, Chap. I, p. 32.

24. Ibid., Chap. I, p. 31.

25. Ibid., Chap. I, pp. 30, 45.

26. Generally, a neutral zone was an area proscribed by the Marines that prohibited combat where American lives and property may be endangered. The Marines established these zones when contending parties were incapable of guaranteeing the safety of life and property and when conflict appeared imminent. For an indepth discussion on neutral zones, see Small Wars Manual, Chap. 5, Sec. 1, pp. 1-4.

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29. LtGen Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret.). First to Fight. (Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, 1985). pp. 179-180. Krepinevich, pp. 172-177.

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31. Ibid., p. 67.

32. U.S. Army Combat Developments Command, Analysis of the Validity of Special Action Forces (SAF), (Washington, DC: 23 March 1965), p. 10.

33. Field Manual 100-20, pp. 127-128.

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36. DA Report AGAM-P, Subj: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces Special Action Force Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1966 dtd 13 Sept 1966;

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57. LtCol Tom Hayden, USMC, and Maj Steve York, USMC, "Lessons Worth Preserving: Vietnam Combined Action Program," Amphibious Warfare Review, Summer 1988, p. 130.
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